



Department of Planning, Housing, & Community Development

Mayor, Matthew T. Ryan

Director, Tarik Abdelazim

STAFF REPORT

TO: Planning Commission Members
FROM: Planning Staff
DATE: May 24, 2013
SUBJECT: 2 and 2.5 Eldredge Street
TM ID #: 160.25-1-7, 160.25-1-12
CASE: 2013-23
COPIES: B. Seachrist, T. Costello, L. Webb (District 4), B. Culver, M. Parker, File

A. REVIEW REQUESTED

Parlor City Paper Box Co., Inc. has submitted an application for Series A Site Plan and Special Use Permit Review to construct a 7,600 sf, one-story addition to an existing structure at the property known as 2 Eldredge Street, and a portion of the abutting parcel known as 2.5 Eldredge Street. The addition would serve the existing use of the site, box manufacturing, considered Light Industrial, and allowed within the C-1 District with Series A Site Plan & Special Use Permit approval.

The proposed addition would attach to the eastern façade of the existing structure, occupying an area currently serving as an asphalted off-street parking area.

B. STAFF COMMENTS

- The off-street parking area labeled “existing unpaved parking. Parking spaces are shown for parking space count only,” in the footprint of the Water Street structure demolished in 2010 is not an approved off-street parking area. This area may not be shown for this use or off-street parking spaces within it utilized to meet the off-street parking requirement for this use. Applicant must clarify the location and amount of approved off-street parking spaces, pursue review to create an off-street parking area at that location or otherwise resolve the minimum off-street parking requirement for the proposed project.

C. ADDITIONAL REVIEWS

The project is located within the boundaries of the LWRP; the applicant has not yet submitted an application for review by the Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC). Upon application submittal, the WAC will review the project for consistency with the policies of the City’s Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan.

C. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN & INITIATIVES IDENTIFIED FOR SUBJECT AREA

The most recent Comprehensive Plan for the City of Binghamton, adopted in 2003, identifies the subject site as located within the North Riverfront District, a district characterized as “underutilized commercial properties with conflicting highway commercial, industrial and highly stressed mixed-use neighborhoods.” The plan for district identified need/opportunity “to create a defining edge along West State Street, a new “edge” to provide an improved visual environment for the West State Street corridor by creating a more closed in feeling and providing enhanced definition to the roadway.” These improvements are to be made through “Street Trees, Sidewalk Improvements, Reorganized Parking and Design Standards.”

D. STANDARDS FOR APPROVAL OF SITE PLANS AND SPECIAL USE PERMITS

Listed below are the *Standards for approval of site plans* found in Article IX of the Zoning Ordinance. In reviewing a Series A Site Plan application, the Planning Commission is guided by the existing characteristics and conditions of the site, its surroundings, and the particular requirements of the Applicant. Elements of concern include, but are not limited to the following:

- Movement of vehicles and people
- Public safety
- Off-street parking and service
- Lot size, density, setbacks, building size, coverage and height
- Landscaping, site drainage, buffering, views or visual character
- Signs, site lighting
- Operational characteristics
- Architectural features, materials and colors
- Compatibility with general character of neighborhood
- Other considerations that may reasonably be related to health, safety, and general welfare

In addition, the general requirements for Special Use Permit approvals, described in Section 410-40 must be complied with. These requirements are as follows:

1. That the land use or activity is designed, located, and operated so as to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.
2. That the land use or activity will encourage and promote a suitable and safe environment for the surrounding neighborhood and will not cause substantial injury to the value of other property in the neighborhood.
3. That the land use or activity will be compatible with existing adjoining development and will not adversely change the established character or appearance of the neighborhood.
4. That effective landscaping and buffering is provided as may be required by the Planning Commission. To this end, parking areas and lot areas not used for structures or access drives shall be improved with grass, shrubs, trees, and other forms of landscaping, the location and species of which shall be specified on the site plan.

5. That a site plan shall be approved in accordance with applicable provisions of Article IX of the Zoning Ordinance.
6. That adequate off-street parking and loading are provided in accordance with Article X of the Zoning Ordinance or other requirements as may be set forth in Section 806, and egress and ingress to parking and loading areas are so designed as to minimize the number of curb cuts and not unduly interfere with traffic or abutting streets.
7. That site development shall be such as to minimize erosion and shall not produce increased surface water runoff onto abutting properties.
8. That existing public streets and utilities servicing the project shall be determined to be adequate.
9. That significant existing vegetation shall be preserved to the extent practicable.
10. That adequate lighting of the site and parking areas is provided and that exterior lighting sources are designed and located so as to produce minimal glare on adjacent streets and properties.
11. That the land use or activity conforms with all applicable regulations governing the zoning district where it is to be located, and with performance standards set forth in Section 503 of the Zoning Ordinance, except as such regulations and performance standards may be modified by the Planning Commission or by the specific provisions of Section 806. Notwithstanding the above, the Planning Commission shall not be authorized to modify the land use regulations of the Zoning Ordinance.

E. SITE REVIEW

The property known as 2 Eldredge Street is an irregular-shaped parcel with direct access off Eldredge Street, State Street, and Rolison Street. The total area of the property is approximately 79,812 square feet. Parlor City Paper & Box Company purchased a section of Rolison Street in 2004 (extending 224 feet south from Eldredge Street) for the stated intent to utilize the area future expansion of the business with new construction of a structure that would occupy the subject area. The applicant stated this area would be used for parking “in the short-term,” under a 2004 Series A Site Plan & Special Use Permit approval by Planning Commission, with intent to demolish the existing building at 358 Water Street (located at the corner of Water Street and Eldredge Street) and construct a new addition in the resulting footprint that connects to the existing structure at 2 Eldredge Street. connect with the buildings at 2 Eldredge Street. The adjacent building at 336 Water Street will be demolished for parking.

Land use in the vicinity of 2 Eldredge Street is a mix of parking lots, commercial buildings, and industrial uses. The site is bounded by railroad tracks to the south, Jacko Transmission Inc. and Bartholomew’s Car Care Center to the east, Eldredge Street to the north, and Rolison Street to the west. Other uses in the area include Derby Fashions, Robert J. Green & Son (roofing contractors), Tier Parts Warehouse Inc., Control Concepts,, and NYSEG’s Noyes Island facility. The Chenango River is located to the west on the west side of Water Street.

F. PREVIOUS ZONING BOARD & PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIVITY

2 Eldredge Street:

- In 2000, the Planning Commission granted a Special Use Permit to Parlor City Paper Box Company to construct a 3,700 s.f. addition to be used for cold storage.
- On March 17 2004, the Planning Commission granted Series A Site Plan & Special Use Permit approval to T.J. Madison Construction Company Inc. / Parlor City Paper Box Company to construct a 16,685 sf warehouse in the C-1 District, on the following conditions:
 1. A revised site plan is submitted to the Planning Department that illustrates curbs, curb cuts, landscaping, and one-way traffic along the northern portion of Rolison Street that intersects with Eldredge Street.
 2. The following recommendations from the City Traffic Board are complied with:
 - Signage stating “Dead End” is installed on Water Street.
 - Signage stating “Authorized Vehicles Only” or similar language is installed on Eldredge Street.
 - Curbing is installed along Rolison Street from the southwestern corner of the property along Water Street to the southern corner of the building.
 3. The applicant complies with the City Engineer regarding the storm sewer lines and any other issues (such as drainage and utilities).

339-343 State Street:

- In 1973, a request to the Zoning Board of Appeals by Dennis Downton to construct an addition to an existing building within four feet of the rear lot line was granted.
- The Downtown Trust received area variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals in 1999 to divide an existing lot with two buildings into two parcels.

362 State Street: The Zoning Board of Appeals granted two area variances to Ernest Kinsey in 1985 for the construction of a 26 by 48-foot addition to his existing printing business.

75 Prospect Avenue: A Series B Site Plan application submitted by Robert Eck to sell recreational vehicles was approved by the Planning Department in 1994.

95 Prospect Avenue: In 2002, Mark Yonaty was granted a use variance to operate a rooming house for students.

326 Water Street: In April of 2000, the Planning Commission granted a Special Use Permit and Series A Site Plan to Control Concepts to construct two small additions.

5-7 Lewis Street: The Planning Commission approved a Series A Site Plan submitted by ISI Associates in 1998 to construct a parking lot.

G. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The applicant's proposal is a SEQR **Unlisted** Action. The Planning Commission may be the lead agency to determine any environmental significance.

1. Motion to determine what type of action:
 - a. Type I
 - b. Type II
 - c. **Unlisted**
2. Determine Lead Agency and other involved agencies.
3. Motion to schedule a public hearing.
4. After the Public Hearing, Determination of Significance based on:

Existing air quality, surface or groundwater quality or quantity, noise levels, existing traffic pattern, solid waste production or disposal, potential for erosion, drainage or flooding problems?	Aesthetic, agricultural, archaeological, historic or other natural or cultural resources; or community or neighborhood character?	Vegetation of fauna, fish, shellfish, or wildlife species, significant habitats, or threatened or endangered species?	A community's existing plans or goals as officially adopted, or a change in use or intensity of use of land or other natural resources?	Growth, subsequent development, or related activities likely to be induced by the proposed action?	Long term, short term, cumulative, or other effects not identified in C1-C5?	Other impacts (including changes in use of either quantity or type of energy)?
X	X	X	X	X	X	X

H. STAFF FINDINGS

Planning Staff recommend that the proposal be **Approved, With Conditions**, based on the following findings:

1. The Planning Commission must determine if the requirements of Section 410-47 for Standards for Approval of Site Plans and the general requirements as set forth in Section 410-40 for a Special Use Permit have been met.

With the inclusion of all suggested conditions of approval (listed below in Section I), the proposed project would result in operational improvements to an anchor use within the North Riverfront District, and complete needed aesthetic improvements to the West State Street commercial corridor, which is consistent with long-term goals for the subject location.

I. SUGGESTED CONDITIONS

If the Planning Commission approves this project, Staff recommends that the following conditions of approval be included:

1. That an adequate pedestrian landing and curb ramps be installed at the northeast corner of the property known as 2.5 Eldredge Street (corner of Eldredge Street & West State Street).
2. That the proposed landscape area indicated on the submitted site plan be extended to include a landscaped buffer strip (minimum width 5') along the western boundary of 2.5 Eldredge Street. This feature will address identified need for aesthetic improvement to create a defined edge along West State Street and remove hazardous condition of existing "pull-through" parking spaces along the frontage.

J. ENCLOSURES

Enclosed are copies of the site plan, application and site photos.

Sincerely,

Patrick C. Day
Planner

Enclosures